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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/770,423

02/04/2004

Mike Soumokil

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11/24/2009

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EXAMINER

SAEED, USMAAN

ART UNIT

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2166

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/770,423	Applicant(s) SOUMOKIL ET AL.	
	Examiner USMAAN SAEED	Art Unit 2166	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 August 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24, 25, 28 and 29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24-25, and 28-29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 04 February 2006 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. Receipt of Applicant's Amendment, filed 08/04/2009 is acknowledged.

Claims 1, 6, 8, 13, 14, 19, 20, and 28 have been amended. Claims 5 and 7 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24-25 and 28-29 are pending in this office action.

In view of the amendments and arguments filed on 08/04/2009, the 35 U.S.C. 101 rejections have been withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24-25 and 28-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Ludwig et al. (Ludwig hereinafter)** (U.S. PG Pub No. 2003/0004874) in view of **Suzuki et al. (Suzuki hereinafter)** (U. S. PG Pub No. 2002/0032692).

With respect to claim 1, **Ludwig** teaches “**a computer readable storage medium for storing an electronic data record, of an invoice, the electronic data record comprising**” as the system may allow data to be entered for the following

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exemplary fields, which the system may be adapted to store as global information on the database: name, address, city, state, zip, country, phone, number, fax number, and maximum invoice amount allowed. The system may use the maximum invoice amount allowed field to establish a threshold for a maximum payment for a single invoice (Ludwig Paragraph 0075).

“a state data field corresponding to the invoice, the state field including an identification of a current state of a processing of the invoice, the current state being assigned by a user through a dialogue displayed on a display device” as "Paid Through Another Source" may be provided by the system as an option for the biller system user to mark an invoice as closed by selecting desired invoices and clicking on the "Paid through another source" button. Once this occurs, the system may, for the invoices in question, update their audit trail to reflect that they were paid outside the system, and then change their status to closed (Ludwig Paragraph 0091 & 0130). Therefore the user is entering the current state “closed” by clicking on the button. Therefore the identification of the current invoice is that it is paid and closed.

Further Ludwig teaches the filter area, the system may provide the following exemplary choices: by date (past due, eligible for discount, due within xxx days); and by status (paid invoices, adjusted invoices, unpaid invoices, paid through another source); and by payer (all payer, specific payer); and by attribute range between xxx and yyy (none, invoice numbers, store/location, purchase orders, purchase request number, invoice issue dates, dollar amount, bill of lading numbers, receiving location zipcodes,

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invoice aging) (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0080). These lines also teach the identification of the current state of the processing of the invoice.

“a link to an event table comprising corresponding events which can occur during the processing of the invoice” as the system may link the status field to the invoice history page, at which the system may display a full status history for the selected invoice. By default, the system may display the following exemplary columns: payer name, invoice number, due date, status, net amount due, amount to pay, P.O. number, P.O. requisition number, store number, and select (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0092). Therefore, these lines teach that the status field is being linked to the history page which contains the current status of an invoice.

Further **Ludwig** teaches the system may permit biller system users to be associated with specific system events, which associations the system may be adapted to store as global information on the database. Any time one of these specific events occurs, the system may generate an automatic e-mail and send it to the selected list of biller system users. For example, exemplary distribution list choices may include: invoices loaded successfully, invoices loaded unsuccessfully, invoice adjusted, payment authorized, payment canceled, payment completed, and payment notification (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0104). These lines teaches associations between biller system containing invoices with specific events such as invoice adjusted, payment authorized, payment canceled, payment completed, and payment notification.

“a link to a proposal table comprising corresponding proposed action for changing the corresponding states” as the system may identify an invoice as having

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one of the following exemplary states: presented, viewed (an invoice may be considered "viewed" when a invoice display query is built with the invoice included; the user does not necessarily need to actually see the invoice to have it considered viewed), verified (an invoice that is in this state may be rolled back to viewed given the user has the permission to verify), payment initiated, payment authorized, payment pending (an invoice in this state may be rolled back to verified given the user has the permission to authorize payment), paid, and closed (Ludwig Paragraph 0127 and 0130-0133 and 0065, 0152).

In the above paragraphs Ludwig teaches an invoice being rolled from one state to another such as verified to viewed or viewed to verified.

“a plurality of states of the processing of the invoice” as the perspective of the payer system user, the system may identify an invoice as having one of the following exemplary states: presented, viewed (an invoice may be considered "viewed" when a invoice display query is built with the invoice included; the user does not necessarily need to actually see the invoice to have it considered viewed), verified (an invoice that is in this state may be rolled back to viewed given the user has the permission to verify), payment initiated, payment authorized, payment pending (an invoice in this state may be rolled back to verified given the user has the permission to authorize payment), paid, and closed (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0127).

“a comment data field corresponding to the invoice, the comment data field comprising comments entered by the user through the dialogue” as the system may provide a notes button 617 for opening a separate browser window 627 containing

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a list of entered notes for this invoice. In the separate browser window, the system may permit the user to enter new notes into a new note textbox and save them by clicking an "add note" button (Ludwig Paragraph 0094).

Ludwig teaches the elements of claim 1 as noted above but does not explicitly disclose, **“links to tables with plurality of possible states” “a first link to a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice during the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of possible states, and a second link to an instruction table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions automatically executed by a computer the instruction comprising workflow automatically initiated by the computer.”**

However, **Suzuki** discloses, **“links to tables with plurality of possible states”** as (Suzuki Figures 4-5).

“a first link to a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice during the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of possible states” as (Suzuki Paragraphs 0065, 0071, 0147, and 0183).

“a second link to an instruction table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions automatically executed by a computer the instruction comprising workflow automatically initiated by the computer” as (Suzuki Paragraphs 0019-0020, 0064, 0073, 0145 and 0150).

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It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching of the cited references because **Suzuki's** teaching would have allowed **Ludwig** to provide a more flexible workflow management system by storing process definitions such as possible states and transitions and by calling and executing API's provided by the workflow management program.

With respect to claim 6, **Ludwig** teaches “**wherein the electronic data record is at least partially accessible via the Internet and wherein the content of the data field for the current state or a data field for comments is editable via the Internet**” as the system may permit information to be maintained and edited at this page, which the system may store as global information on the database (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0064). The present invention may be appropriately adapted to include such communication functionality and Internet browsing ability (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0157).

With respect to claim 8, **Ludwig** teaches “**a computer implemented method for processing an electronic data record of an invoice, the method comprising**” as the system may allow data to be entered for the following exemplary fields, which the system may be adapted to store as global information on the database: name, address, city, state, zip, country, phone, number, fax number, and maximum invoice amount allowed. The system may use the maximum invoice amount allowed field to establish a threshold for a maximum payment for a single invoice (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0075)

“displaying a dialogue on a display device for enabling a user to assign a current state of a processing of the invoice and storing using a processor, an identification of the current state of the invoice in a state data field corresponding to the invoice in the electronic data record” as "Paid Through Another Source" may be provided by the system as an option for the biller system user to mark an invoice as closed by selecting desired invoices and clicking on the "Paid through another source" button. Once this occurs, the system may, for the invoices in question, update their audit trail to reflect that they were paid outside the system, and then change their status to closed (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0091 & 0130). Therefore the user is entering the state “closed” by clicking on the button. Therefore the identification of state of the current invoice is being stored/updated such as paid and closed.

“a link to an event table comprising corresponding events which can occur during the processing of the invoice” as the system may link the status field to the invoice history page, at which the system may display a full status history for the selected invoice. By default, the system may display the following exemplary columns: payer name, invoice number, due date, status, net amount due, amount to pay, P.O. number, P.O. requisition number, store number, and select (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0092). Therefore, these lines teach that the status field is being linked to the history page which contains the current status of an invoice.

Further **Ludwig** teaches the system may permit biller system users to be associated with specific system events, which associations the system may be adapted to store as global information on the database. Any time one of these specific events

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occurs, the system may generate an automatic e-mail and send it to the selected list of biller system users. For example, exemplary distribution list choices may include: invoices loaded successfully, invoices loaded unsuccessfully, invoice adjusted, payment authorized, payment canceled, payment completed, and payment notification (**Ludwig Paragraph 0104**).

These lines teaches associations between biller system containing invoices with specific events such as invoice adjusted, payment authorized, payment canceled, payment completed, and payment notification.

“a link to a proposal table comprising corresponding proposed action for changing the corresponding states” as the system may identify an invoice as having one of the following exemplary states: presented, viewed (an invoice may be considered "viewed" when a invoice display query is built with the invoice included; the user does not necessarily need to actually see the invoice to have it considered viewed), verified (an invoice that is in this state may be rolled back to viewed given the user has the permission to verify), payment initiated, payment authorized, payment pending (an invoice in this state may be rolled back to verified given the user has the permission to authorize payment), paid, and closed (**Ludwig Paragraph 0127 and 0130-0133 and 0065, 0152**).

In the above paragraphs Ludwig teaches an invoice being rolled from one state to another such as verified to viewed or viewed to verified.

“a plurality of states of the processing of the invoice” as the perspective of the payer system user, the system may identify an invoice as having one of the

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following exemplary states: presented, viewed (an invoice may be considered "viewed" when a invoice display query is built with the invoice included; the user does not necessarily need to actually see the invoice to have it considered viewed), verified (an invoice that is in this state may be rolled back to viewed given the user has the permission to verify), payment initiated, payment authorized, payment pending (an invoice in this state may be rolled back to verified given the user has the permission to authorize payment), paid, and closed (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0127).

“a comment data field corresponding to the invoice, the comment data field comprising comments entered by the user through the dialogue” as the system may provide a notes button 617 for opening a separate browser window 627 containing a list of entered notes for this invoice. In the separate browser window, the system may permit the user to enter new notes into a new note textbox and save them by clicking an "add note" button (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0094).

Ludwig teaches the elements of claim 8 as noted above but does not explicitly disclose, **“a first link to a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice during the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of possible states, and a second link to an instruction table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions automatically executed by a computer the instructions comprising a workflow automatically initiated by the computer.”**

However, **Suzuki** discloses, **“links to tables with plurality of possible states”** as (**Suzuki** Figures 4-5).

“a first link to a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice during the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of possible states” as (Suzuki Paragraphs 0065, 0071, 0147, and 0183).

“a second link to an instruction table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions automatically executed by a computer the instructions comprising a workflow automatically initiated by the computer” as (Suzuki Paragraphs 0019-0020, 0064, 0073 and 0145).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teaching of the cited references because **Suzuki's** teaching would have allowed **Ludwig** to provide a more flexible workflow management system by storing process definitions such as possible states and transitions and by calling and executing API's provided by the workflow management program.

With respect to claim 10, **Ludwig** teaches **“the method of claim 8, further comprising: performing at least one of selecting, sorting, evaluating, and analyzing the electronic invoice according to the current state”** as the system may provide a sort area to allow returned results to be sorted in ascending or descending order according to the following exemplary criteria: due date, invoice number, invoice date, purchase order number, net amount due, store or location number, and invoice aging (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0080).

With respect to claim 12, **Ludwig** teaches “**wherein the current state is selectable by the user according to predefinable events**” as in this section, the system may permit biller system users to be associated with specific system events, which associations the system may be adapted to store as global information on the database. Any time one of these specific events occurs, the system may generate an automatic e-mail and send it to the selected list of biller system users. For example, exemplary distribution list choices may include: invoices loaded successfully, invoices loaded unsuccessfully, invoice adjusted, payment authorized, payment canceled, payment completed, and payment notification (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0104). The system may only permit invoices with the status of “paid”, “presented”, or “viewed” to be closed. All other invoice states may indicate payer workflow is in progress, and the system may not permit invoices having such states to be closed (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0105).

The system may permit a biller system user to select an option 605 to display invoices based on selected criteria and/or specify general search criteria for listing invoices. Depending on the selection, the system may direct the user to a “view options” page 606 for filtering and sorting (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0080).

With respect to claim 13, **Ludwig** teaches “**the method of claim 8, wherein the method is for use in business software, or enterprise resource planning software**” as the business service provider system 16 may be an exchange or other service bureau application providing a plurality of business processing services to its clients (which may include the biller system 12 and/or payer system 14). One such

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business processing service may be electronic bill presentment and payment, as may be provided using a system and/or method consistent with the invention (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0027).

Group of claims 14, 16, 18-19 and 20, 22, 24-25 are essentially the same as group of claims 8, 10, and 12-13 except they set forth the claimed invention as system and a computer-readable medium comprising instructions and are rejected for the same reasons as applied hereinabove.

With respect to claim 28, **Ludwig** teaches “**an electronic data structure for an electronic data record according to any one of claims 1 and 6**” as the exemplary embodiments of the system of the present invention described herein may be embodied as one or more distributed computer program processes, data structures (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0156).

Claim 29 is essentially the same as claim 13 except it sets forth the claimed invention as an electronic data structure and is rejected for the same reason as applied hereinabove.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments filed 08/04/2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In these arguments applicant relies on the amended claims and not the original ones.

Applicant argues that **Ludwig and Suzuki** do not teach or suggest **“a first link to a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice during the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of possible states,” “a second link to an instruction table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions automatically executed by a computer,” “a third link to an event table comprising identification of the plurality of possible states and corresponding events which can occur during the processing of the invoice,” “a fourth link to a proposal table comprising the identification of the plurality of possible state and corresponding proposed action for changing the corresponding states” and “a comment data field corresponding to the invoice, the comment data field comprising comments entered by the user through the dialogue.”**

In response to the preceding arguments examiner respectfully submits that Ludwig teaches **“a link to an event table comprising corresponding events which can occur during the processing of the invoice”** as the system may link the status field to the invoice history page, at which the system may display a full status history for the selected invoice. By default, the system may display the following exemplary

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columns: payer name, invoice number, due date, status, net amount due, amount to pay, P.O. number, P.O. requisition number, store number, and select (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0092). Further **Ludwig** teaches the system may permit biller system users to be associated with specific system events, which associations the system may be adapted to store as global information on the database. Any time one of these specific events occurs, the system may generate an automatic e-mail and send it to the selected list of biller system users. For example, exemplary distribution list choices may include: invoices loaded successfully, invoices loaded unsuccessfully, invoice adjusted, payment authorized, payment canceled, payment completed, and payment notification (**Ludwig** Paragraph 0104).

These lines teaches associations/links between biller system containing invoices with specific events such as invoice adjusted, payment authorized, payment canceled, payment completed, and payment notification.

“a link to a proposal table comprising corresponding proposed action for changing the corresponding states” as the system may identify an invoice as having one of the following exemplary states: presented, viewed (an invoice may be considered "viewed" when a invoice display query is built with the invoice included; the user does not necessarily need to actually see the invoice to have it considered viewed), verified (an invoice that is in this state may be rolled back to viewed given the user has the permission to verify), payment initiated, payment authorized, payment pending (an invoice in this state may be rolled back to verified given the user has the permission to

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authorize payment), paid, and closed (Ludwig Paragraph 0127 and 0130-0133 and 0065, 0152).

In the above paragraphs Ludwig teaches an invoice being rolled from one state to another such as verified to viewed or viewed to verified.

“a comment data field corresponding to the invoice, the comment data field comprising comments entered by the user through the dialogue” as the system may provide a notes button 617 for opening a separate browser window 627 containing a list of entered notes for this invoice. In the separate browser window, the system may permit the user to enter new notes into a new note textbox and save them by clicking an "add note" button (Ludwig Paragraph 0094).

These lines teach an interface which is permitting a user to enter notes in the text field. Examiner interprets the notes as being the claimed comments.

Ludwig teaches the elements the argued limitation as noted above but does not explicitly disclose, **“links to tables with plurality of possible states” “a first link to a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice during the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of possible states, and a second link to an instruction table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions automatically executed by a computer.”**

However, Suzuki discloses, **“links to tables with plurality of possible states”** as (Suzuki Figures 4-5 and paragraphs 0064-0065).

These figures provide tables 210 and 211 which contain plurality of possible states.

“a first link to a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice during the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of possible states” as (Suzuki Paragraphs 0064-0065, 0071, 0147, and 0183).

These paragraphs teach that table 210 contains plurality of possible state and stores definitions of these possible states that depend on process definition and table 211 which contains definition of possible transition between the states. Examiner interpret the definition as description of the states.

“a second link to an instruction table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions automatically executed by a computer the instruction comprising workflow automatically initiated by the computer” as (Suzuki Paragraphs 0019-0020, 0064, 0073, 0145 and 0150).

The workflow data 143 contains tables 214 and 215, which specifies a processing mode for calling a state transition request application programming interface (API) by use of a process definition. Therefore state transition request table is calling an API based on the request, thus containing instructions for changing the state by executing the state transition process.

Claims must be given the broadest reasonable interpretation during examination

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and limitations appearing in the specification but not recited in the claim are not read into the claim (See M.P.E.P. 2111 [R-I]).

Conclusion

4. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Contact Information

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to USMAAN SAEED whose telephone number is (571)272-4046. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hosain Alam can be reached on (571)272-3978. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Usmaan Saeed/
Examiner, Art Unit 2166
November 20, 2009

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Art Unit: 2166

/Hosain T Alam/
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